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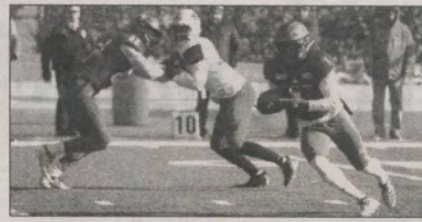
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HOME RENOVATION

Sigma Pi hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for its newly renovated chapter house on Sixth Street on Saturday.

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BEST OF 2019

With no football game this week, or all season, look back at 2019's top performers.

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THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Monday, August 31, 2020

"TELL THE TRUTH AND DON'T BE AFRAID"

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CELEBRATING A CENTURY OF COVERAGE

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KARINA DELGADO | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Attendees of a Back the Blue rally march through the street in front of the Coles County Courthouse on Aug. 29.



KARINA DELGADO | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Black Lives Matter counterprotesters demonstrate on the steps of the Coles County Courthouse on Aug. 29.

Weekend protests clash in Charleston

By Corryn Brock and Elizabeth Taylor
News Editor and Associate News Editor | @DEN_news

Two groups, one supporting law enforcement and the other supporting Black Lives Matter gave their views a platform this weekend at the Coles County Courthouse.

However, people supporting the Back the Blue rally and those supporting the Black Lives Matter counterprotest briefly clashed on the square on Saturday, minutes after the rally.

The conflict did not escalate to largescale physical violence, but heated verbal exchanges and alleged aggressive physical contact between the two sides went on for some time before the members of the Coles County Sheriff's Office, Charleston Police Department and University Police Department dispersed the crowds.

The Back the Blue rally was organized by Michael Neal, a Charleston resident who wanted to show support of law enforcement agencies.

Over 200 people attended the event, which was held on the south side of the square. Many wore clothing or brought signs with various pro-law enforcement slogans.

Community members spoke for just under an hour, while around 50 Black Lives Matter supporters gathered on the north side of the square.

After the rally was officially over, organizers from the BLM group spoke to police officers before leading a march toward the south side of the square.

Many of the rally attendees had already dispersed by the time the two groups interacted, but arguments broke out almost immediately.

The march halted briefly, but after a few minutes the police force led the group toward the courthouse steps where the rally was held.

Counter-protesters grouped together on the steps, holding up signs and flags with Black Lives Matter slogans and messages, and were separated from the Back the Blue group by a line of police officers.

Arguments and shouting matches continued for around half an hour, but as it became obvious that neither group would leave, the police separated the two groups and moved them off the road to the sidewalks.

At this point, the Back the Blue supporters dispersed. The BLM counterprotesters marched around the square on the sidewalk once before doing the same.

Community member and Back the Blue ral-

ly attendee Starla Gaines said she came to the event to support the officers in Charleston.

"I just feel the need to support the police around here," Gaines said. "I've had good experiences with them and I'm aware that there are some cops out there that breach their ethics and I think they do get dealt with when they need to be but I feel as a person in the community who feels strongly about protecting everyone I feel like I should show up and show my support."

Brianna Hull-Dennis, sophomore communications major, was a main organizer of the counterprotest.

Hull-Dennis said the purpose of the counterprotest was to combat blind support of the police.

PROTESTS, page 3

Student-athletes organize march on campus

By Corryn Brock
News Editor | @corryn_brock

Around 200 members of Eastern's community attended a Black Lives Matter march Friday afternoon.

The march was organized by student-athletes, Riley Baker, a junior physical education major, Payton Powell, a junior business marketing major, and Chase Schmitt, a sophomore physical education major, who are all members of the track and field team.

Baker said the three men organized the march to give the campus community an outlet to share support for Black Lives Matter.

"We decided to organize this so we could bring light to EIU's campus about the social injustices going on in the world today and bring light to the Black Lives Matter movement and give EIU students and staff the opportunity to show their love and support for the Black community," Baker said.

Powell said he felt it was a good place for people to start if they have not previously been involved in activism.

"I think it was a good starting point for some students, like one of the students who went up there and said 'if this is your first time don't let it end here,'" Powell said.

University President David Glassman attended the event and said he sees value in coming together for a greater cause.

"It's important to have a shared voice to show others that our students are committed to a world without prejudice, a world with social justice for all," Glassman said.

He added that Eastern supports Black students.

"It's to stand together and support our African American students," Glassman said. "EIU supports that Black lives matter as well as what they stand for."

MARCH, page 2



KARINA DELGADO | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Eastern student-athletes march through campus on Friday afternoon with other members of the Eastern community.

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High: 84°
Low: 67°



Isolated Storms
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THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

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The Daily Eastern News
1802 Buzzard Hall
Eastern Illinois University
Charleston, IL 61920
217-581-2812
217-581-2923 (fax)



News Staff

Editor-in-Chief
Adam Tumino
DENeic@gmail.com

News Editor

Corryn Brock
dennewsdesk@gmail.com

Associate News Editor

Elizabeth Taylor
dennewsdesk@gmail.com

Photo Editor

Karina Delgado
DENphotodesk@gmail.com

Assistant Photo Editor

Zach Berger
DENphotodesk@gmail.com

Advertising Staff

Faculty Adviser
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Sigma Pi holds ribbon-cutting ceremony

By Corryn Brock
News Editor | @corryn_brock

Sigma Pi reopened its chapter house Saturday afternoon after renovations to the 130-year-old home.

The Beta Gamma chapter was founded in 1947 purchased the home in 1954. The house was paid off in 1965 and the chapter celebrated the full-ownership by hosting a mortgage burning party.

The fraternity raised \$750,000 for the various renovations throughout the house.

The ribbon cutting brought current fraternity members, alumni from the Beta Gamma chapter of the fraternity, employees from the fraternity's headquarters and community leaders, Mayor Brandon Combs, and the chapter's advisor and Sigma Pi alum Provost Jay Gattrell.

In a statement, the fraternity's Central Illinois Alumni Association Board of Directors said:

"Our thanks to the Men of Sigma Pi for their understanding and support during the city negotiations and re-construction of the Chapter House. The two years without a home has been difficult, but it is now time to rise from the construction and once again gain our prominence on campus and in the community."

There is nothing you cannot accomplish within the bond of our Brotherhood."

Roger Claar, an alumni of the Beta Gamma chapter, cut the ribbon for the opening.

Claar said he enjoyed being back at 956 6th Street to celebrate.

"I haven't seen some of (the fraternity brothers) in 30 years, 40 years, probably some of them since I graduated. It was great to see old friends. They're life-long friends."

He said he felt like he could pick up a conversation with his fraternity brothers as if he had seen them the day before.

Jeff Knezovich, Sigma Pi Central Illinois Alumni Association Board of Directors and Beta Gamma chapter alumni, helped with the renovation project since the beginning.

He said the it was important that people understood why they chose the location for the house that they did.

"An important aspect of this fraternity house is we chose to be in the middle of the community. We want to be a part of the community, the campus and both lives are important in the city and on campus. Just to say we're a member of the campus doesn't work, we want to be a part of both," Knezovich said. "We want to be good people for the community and the campus."



ELIZABETH TAYLOR | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

The ribbon is cut at the newly renovated Sigma Pi chapter house on Sixth Street Saturday afternoon.

Current chapter president and senior criminology major, Luke Oskvarek, said he was very happy to open the house once again.

"It really feels like a home and I'm glad to be back," Oskvarek said. "It's an open

door. I want people to come see it. You don't have to be a part of this fraternity or the Greek system to come check it out."

Corryn Brock can be reached at 581-2812 or at cebrock@eiu.edu.

» MARCH

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Lulu Shimonde, a senior psychology major, said she thinks it is important people to be visible when speaking on their beliefs.

"It's good to be visible and say that we stand with those people. Be vocal. I think just saying the words means a lot to people," Shimonde said. "If you can't even say it then how am I going to believe you just because you show up."

Vice President of Student Affairs Anne Flaherty, who recently began her first year at Eastern, said she attended to show support for Black students.

"It's great to see the support for the BLM movement and our students of color," Flaherty said. "I support all students, all students of color and the movement

and I wanted to show my support as the Vice President of Student Affairs and show folks that I care about them and be here and show that support."

She said she wants to encourage students to have conversations with each other.

"I want to remind students to engage in civil dialogue with each other and respect each other's viewpoints and be openminded and caring to one another," Flaherty said.

Shimonde said she hopes people recognized the significance of the march after the march that took place last spring following white power propaganda being found on campus.

"I think it's important to recognize that

people's lives are at stake and the systems we are falling victim to are once again not changing," Shimonde said. "This is the second time we've done this on campus and I think it's important to register that support matters, Black lives matter, brown lives matter, lives of color matter, lives of different sexualities matter, these are things that matter to us."

Baker said the turnout from the event encouraged him to keep pushing conversations he finds important.

"This is the first time we've ever done something like this so I think it was kind of a turning point or mind changer for us that if we want our voices to be heard and we want to make change then we need to take action and seeing how the turnout

was today motivates me to continue push it because it still needs to be talked about," Baker said.

Powell said he hopes students keep up activism on campus.

"If this is your first time doing something like this that's great but do more research, ask the uncomfortable questions, talk to your family," Powell said. "That was one of the best messages today in my opinion, just that we shouldn't let this die."

He added he has had conversations about making an EIU mask with BLM on it for student athletes.

Corryn Brock can be reached at 581-2812 or cebrock@eiu.edu.

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» PROTESTS
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“We’re trying to critique the police. Black Lives Matter doesn’t necessarily have to be anti-police but it’s been made so, it’s a hard conversation to have. We just need to show that if you show love for the police, you embolden their acts,” Hull-Dennis said. “You make them feel righteous in the way that they act, you make them martyrs when anything happens to them.”

Gaines said she supports anyone who wants to speak peacefully but understands that emotions can run high.

“I support anyone who goes out and speaks as long as they’re doing so peacefully. I’m not really for any violence in any shape or form. I think it went pretty well compared to most places that has gone down at, I think that we handled it pretty well for the most part,” Gaines said. “Some people got out of hand but that happens when people get emotional and that’s just human nature.”

Jordan Samuels, junior digital media technology major, said he took issue with the idea that protests must be peaceful to be considered valid.

“We sat on these streets, we sat in coffee shops, we sat everywhere to be peaceful. Y’all shot us with water hoses, y’all beat us with batons, what else do y’all want us to do? I’m tired of being peaceful, I’m tired of just talking,” Samuels said. “I’m here today because I want justice and equality for everyone.”

Lynn Payton was a community member who attended the rally but left before the counterprotesters approached.

“I loved it. It was very uplifting, it was very honest, it was very respectful,” Payton said. “People need to have respect for each other, including law enforcement and each other.”

L Crawley, a junior communications

and video production major, said she was not happy with the response to the BLM supporters.

“I didn’t appreciate being pushed or cursed at. Someone physically put their hands on me so I’m pressing charges. I didn’t appreciate the fact that only our side was policed when we were the ones being peaceful, when other people were throwing out racial slurs and cursing at us. They were threatened by our passions because systematically Black people are more threatening even though we weren’t doing anything wrong,” Crawley said. “It was a little disheartening because we partnered with the police to do this.”

At least two candidates for state political offices were in attendance for the events.

Darren Bailey, candidate for Illinois’ Senate’s 55th District, was in attendance to support the Back the Blue rally and Kody Czerwonka, candidate for Illinois House District 110, attended the counterprotest.

The Daily Eastern News was unable to locate Bailey before he left the square.

Czerwonka, however, was able to be reached directly following the groups finally dispersing.

He said he felt progress was made between the two groups.

“I think it was productive conversation, especially at the end with both sides and I think ultimately that’s the goal that needs to happen to implement change because everything is so divided, and you’re either in one side or you’re on the other side and it’s important to have those conversations to try to have an understanding with the other side. Silence shouldn’t be an option,” Czerwonka said. “We’re so divided right now and people need to speak up for the people who



KARINA DELGADO | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS

Two Black Lives Matter protesters speak with an attendee of the Back the Blue rally in front of the Coles County Courthouse on Aug. 29.

haven’t really had a voice the past 100 hundred years and it’s important that everyone speaks up against racism and prejudices.”

Some Eastern students who attended on the side of the counterprotest said they felt disrespected by statements from the rally attendees.

Samuels took issue with the use of Black culture by people who do not care about Black issues.

“What irritates you about my skin so much? What irritates you so much that I could walk down the street and you think I’m a thief? But yet, y’all came here, y’all took us, y’all killed natives, y’all killed, y’all raped, y’all stole, all this,”

Samuels said. “Y’all stole culture to try to make it your own, y’all try to be black people so bad but when it’s time to be black, y’all don’t want to be black. Y’all don’t want to be shot, y’all don’t want to be beaten, y’all don’t want to be in jail for something you didn’t do. So stop saying you care about black people when you see a black person on the floor dead, y’all want to walk, run and go about your day. You can’t do that.”

Crawley said she felt a personal connection to Breonna Taylor, fatally shot by police March 13.

“I just moved here from Louisville, and Breonna Taylor was killed about 12 minutes from where I lived, so it

could’ve been me or any of my friends, and the fact that the killers are still out there shakes me to my core,” she said. “The fact that they’re having a protest talking about ‘blue lives mattering,’ it’s like they’re doing everything in their power to take away from Black lives, and it’s like that’s not the point of our movement. We need to make it known that Black people do exist, we are worth fighting for, we deserve to live. They’re talking about blue lives matter... they’re doing it just to spite us.”

Elizabeth Taylor and Corryn Brock can be reached at 581-2812 or at dennewsdesk@gmail.com

OPINIONS

STAFF EDITORIAL

Racist commenters should be ashamed of themselves

The Coles County Courthouse was the site of a Back the Blue rally and a Black Lives Matter counterprotest on Saturday morning.

We at The Daily Eastern News were on the scene while the rallies began, and when they converged later on. The sides were separated by a line of police officers and heated words were exchanged.

We live streamed on Facebook throughout the morning, and the heated words exchanged outside the courthouse were nothing in comparison to some of the hateful and shockingly racist comments that appeared on our stream.

We are aware that racism exists both in the Charleston community and all over the country, but some of the comments shared on Saturday seemed to come straight out of the Jim Crow era.

At one point of the stream, a Black woman was seen yelling across the street, and a commenter responded by saying, “someone shove a banana in her big mouth.”

This comment exhibits the worst of

what was seen on our stream and also represents the very worst of our society.

The fact that someone felt comfortable enough to make that comment on a public forum is almost as upsetting as the comment itself. People seem to feel too emboldened to make racist remarks, especially when online.

There were other comments that were not as blatantly racist, but showed a deep misunderstanding for racial issues in America. Other comments included words like “punks” and “thugs,” words that often take on racial undertones when used.

The existence of racism in this community, and any community, is unavoidable. If anyone doubted that, the comments shared Saturday should serve as proof.

To those who deny the existence of racism, we ask that they open their eyes. To those who make these racist remarks, we hope they are ashamed of themselves.

Unfortunately, they most likely are not.

COLUMN

RNC shows that white people need to wake up

I know everyone was trying to survive the first week of school during the Republican National Convention and may have missed it, so I’ll go ahead and sum it up for you. There was the normal bashing of Democrats and their values, as well as messages supporting Trump’s Care Act and how he’s dealing with the coronavirus.

There were many parts that were so off base and dramatic that I laughed out loud. If you don’t believe me, I encourage you to go back and watch it for yourself.

There were also some heartwarming speeches such as Maximo Alvarez’s story about fleeing communism and finding the American dream. Some speeches even made me question whether President Trump was all that bad, but all those thoughts floated right out of my head when the issue of racism was brought up.

Trump basically sent out the message that he has Black friends so he’s not racist. We need to get that attitude out of our society and



Lindsey Ulrey

certainly out of the White House.

There were also speakers like Abby Johnson, who in a YouTube video said that it’d be “smart” for cops to racially profile her “brown son.” Mark and Patricia McCloskey also spoke. You may remember them as the couple who pointed guns at Black Lives Matter protesters as they passed their house.

With a president and his campaign glorifying these kinds of actions systematic racism can’t be denied. White people need to wake up and stop being complacent. We’re so privileged that we have the ability to be complacent while people of color can’t. Every white

person, including myself, needs to look at ourselves because we’re the problem.

We need to take a look at our ignorance, stereotypes that we’ve held onto, and implicit bias that we may have not been aware of and fix them. Everything I have written is my personal opinion, and if you don’t agree with everything that’s okay. I would much rather you do your own research and disagree with me while making an informed decision and an informed vote than for you to agree with me and not be informed.

I encourage everyone to do research and be sure of your vote because like Charlie Kirk said on the first night of the convention, “This election is the most critical since 1860 when a man named Lincoln was elected to preserve the union from disintegration.”

Lindsey Ulrey is a freshman political science major. She can be reached at 581-2812 or lrulrey@eiu.edu.

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Editor-in-Chief Adam Tumino	News Editor Corryn Brock	Associate News Editor Elizabeth Taylor	Opinions Editor Ryan Meyer	Photo Editor Karina Delgado	Assistant Photo Editor Zach Berger
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COLUMN | FOOTBALL

Panthers' top performers from 2019

This week would have been week one of the 2020 season for the Eastern football team. The Panthers were scheduled to host Indiana State on Thursday.

That game, along with all of the other games of the season, was canceled as a result of COVID-19.

There will still be some football happening on campus this semester, as the Panthers are able to begin practicing again on Monday.

As the team returns to the field to prepare for this season, whenever it may begin, let's look back at the 2019 season and highlight some of the team's standout performers.

Isaiah Hill

The Eastern offense may have averaged just 14.8 points per game last season, the that does not mean that the offense did not have some dynamic playmakers.

Wide receiver Isaiah Hill, despite playing in only eight games, led the team in receptions (57), receiving yards (569) and receiving touchdowns (4). He also rushed for 2 touchdowns on the season.

Hill was a redshirt-sophomore last season after transferring to Eastern from South Dakota State. After redshirting in 2017, Hill appeared in 11 games for the Jackrabbits in the 2018 season.



Adam Tumino

His first season in the OVC was a success, and Hill was named to the All-OVC Newcomer Team. He also earned OVC Offensive Player of the Week honors Nov. 17 after recording 13 catches for 152 yards, including a 73-yard touchdown catch.

Hill ranked 31st in the FCS in receptions per game with 7.5, which was also the sixth-most in Eastern football history.

Jaelin Benefield

Hill was not the only member of the Panther offense to be named to the All-OVC Newcomer Team in 2019.

True-freshman running back Jaelin Benefield joined Hill on the honorary squad.

Benefield led the team in rushing attempts (125), rushing yards (402) and rushing touchdowns (5). He also was second to Hill in receptions (39), receiving yards (299) and receiving touchdowns (2).

He was the first freshman to lead



FILE PHOTO | THE DAILY EASTERN NEWS
Eastern wide receiver Isaiah Hill turns upfield after catching a pass in a game at O'Brien Field against Southeast Missouri on November 16, 2019.

the Panthers in rushing since Vincent Webb in 2003. Webb finished his career in second place on Eastern's all-time rushing list.

Benefield's best game came against Tennessee State on Nov. 9, which was the Panthers' lone win on the season. He ran the ball 14 times for 105 yards and 2 touchdowns and also recorded 4 catches for 32 yards and a touchdown.

He was named OVC Offensive Player of the Week the following day.

Dytarious Johnson

On the defensive side of the ball, Eastern linebacker Dytarious Johnson stands out physically and statistically.

In his junior season in 2019, Johnson finished tied for the team lead with 67 tackles and led the team with

13.5 tackles for loss and 4.5 sacks. He also paced the Panthers with 4 forced fumbles which led the OVC and ranked fifth in the FCS.

Johnson was named second team All-OVC. He also moved into seventh place on Eastern's all-time list with 36.5 career tackles for loss.

Adam Tumino can be reached at 581-2812 or ajtumino@eiu.edu.

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